

# SPANDAN SAMAJ SEVA SAMITI

*LETS MAKE WORLD A BETTER PLACE*



## ANNUAL REPORT 2016

*SPANDAN SAMAJ SEVA SAMITI IS COMMITTED TO THE FOOD & NUTRITION SECURITY OF KOR KU TRIBE COMMUNITY IN MADHYA PRADESH*



## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



*Spandan Samaj Seva Samiti has been endeavoring to reduce malnutrition and food insecurity among Korku tribe of Khandwa, Burhanpur and Betul districts. The core program of the organization is the community based malnutrition management that has dual goal. On one hand it intends to reduce the suffering of the currently malnourished children while on the other hand intends to create a food secure environment. To that end, a range of activities have been undertaken to address major causative factors of malnutrition.*

*Our chief concern has been the fact that majority of Korku tribe children and women face tremendous protein deficiency along with lacking essential micronutrients in their diets. The incidence of anemia too has been widespread with nearly 3/4<sup>th</sup> of Korku women suffering from it.*

*The early tracking and follow-up has helped many Korku tribes' U5 children recover at the community through a non-facility based care. The service delivery gaps have been bridged through regular health camps in remote regions and outreach could be made to nearly 1000 children with Vitamin A and De-worming in distant places. The events at Anganwadis have added to joy and increased retention of children at the centers. Community crèches have been piloted to provide day care to children below 03 years and ones belonging to daily wage earning tribal mothers. They are most susceptible to onset and rapid growth of malnutrition that may cause irreparable physical and cognitive losses.*

*We have chosen an agricultural pathway to address nutrition and food security issues among the target Korku community. This includes revival of traditional crops and Millets that once were the mainstay of their food and nutrition. What began as a small initiative to generate awareness and muster traditional seeds has scaled up to scores of farmers devoting a part of their fields to grow Millet and traditional crops.*

*A complementary activity has been the Cloth for work program that facilitates people engaging through voluntary labor contributions to amend their neighborhood land and water resources. Clothing is provided as incentive for their volunteerism. Land bunds, sand bag check-dams, deepening and desilting of wells and ponds were the works so accomplished.*

*The protein sufficiency is aimed at through promoting free range Backyard Nutrition Gardens and Backyard Nutrition Gardens. The initial response had been encouraging and now we are in the process of expansion and consolidation.*

*Social Behavior Change (SBC) has been aiming at not only demystifying malnutrition but also trying to bring about positive deviation in health seeking behavior and diet diversification. The IEC materials in indigenous Korku dialect have been very effective. The Community opinion leaders too have been participative in this process. A range of training intervention has been instrumental in bring about changed attitude and practices. Korku Language preservation work is underway.*

*This layered model of malnutrition has been effective at generating peoples' participation and building mothers' capacity at better caring and feeding practices. Significant numbers of children recovering at the community itself is an evidence of the effectiveness of our efforts.*

*I would like to thank all our team and partners and volunteers in our endeavors to d reduce malnutrition among Korku tribe community.*

**Seema Prakash**

**[Recipient Stree Shakti Samman –Rani Laxmibai Award 2014]**

## COMMUNITY BASED MALNUTRITION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

This program is focused on helping most of the malnourished Korku tribe children recover at community in a non-facility based care. The children are early tracked using different anthropometric measures and deriving their nutritional status as per WHO norms. Children are further classified into infected and non-infected category and the latter are admitted into community care. They are followed up with regular growth monitoring, mothers' counseling and extending other project benefits. This year 2138 malnourished children were cared for including 764 severely malnourished children. Alongside 2164 pregnant and 2228 lactating mothers were also followed up with visits and counseling. 1710 pregnant mothers were motivated to go for antenatal care. Total Home visits by frontlines numbered 9573.

To reduce the protein and micronutrient deficiency, the families of victim children are provided vegetable seeds and technical know-how to grow Backyard Nutrition gardens so that they can have access to green & leafy vegetables for most of the months in a year. This year 629 families grew and consumed vegetables from their own nutrition gardens. Some could even sell the bit of surplus. 1564 fruit yielding saplings were also provided to the targeted families. During the reported period we also initiated Backyard Free Range poultry on a small scale. 163 families were assisted and encouraging results were seen and valuable learning gained to expand the initiative.

Community crèche is a pilot program. 8 such crèches have been running in community setting. The children of daily wage earning mothers unable to provide adequate home based care while she is away are admitted and provided a day care by crèche worker and helper chosen from the community. The children are also provided 03 meals daily. 160 children are being outreached through this initiative.

Child Friendly Anganwadis is another program that helps the centers through provision of clothing, toys and other recreational materials. 46 such Anganwadis have been so assisted and that has helped increase the retention time of children at centers and so access most of the benefits.

Volunteers too have shared their part and one of the groups in Akola has continued with collecting and packaging and sending boxes. They call it Naivedyam and this year 196 severe acute malnourished children could be extended this supplementary ration.

Similarly a group of volunteers called Indian Impact supported a program to feed the crèche children with eggs and milk regularly. This has greatly helped in plugging the protein and micronutrient gaps in child's diet.

Immunization was facilitated and an effort was made to complement the government efforts by extending Vitamin A and Deworming to children in remote locations. 854 children received Vitamin A and 609 were administered deworming tablets.

To bridge the service delivery gap 15 Health Camps were organized in distant villages that diagnosed and extended free medicines to 888 children and 203 women apart from men.

Support was extended to 288 severely underweight that were kept under surveillance by Women & Child Development department for a month. Our help included provision of a ration packet, growth monitoring, health checks, medicines and counseling to families. The mothers who would migrate were also provided a Mother and child Health Card that they can carry and avail health and nutrition benefits at destination places.



## REVIVAL OF TRDIITONAL CROPS & MILLETS

We have chosen the agricultural pathway to address the household hunger and malnutrition. Since 3-4 decades Korku farmers gradually left their traditional crops and Millets for cash crops like soybean that they grew but did not consume. This change deterred their food and nutrition availability and so household food & nutrition crisis increased and manifested itself in widespread malnutrition. Traditional crops and Millet were once the backbone of round the year accessibility of food and nutrition at home. We have been running campaigns to generate awareness on importance of revival of traditional crops and Millets like: Koda (paspalum srcobatus), Kutki (small Millets), Sawa (Indian Barnyard Millet) and jowar (sorghum) and so on. We also collected and set up Millet seed banks and the process of was initiated 3 years back. Now nearly 2000 families used a part of their field to grow them and 255 families borrowed the seeds. During forthcoming years, the production will grow as soybean has failed for past three years and many Korku farmers opted for Maize and Millets.

To ease the drudgery of women due to hard work at grinding the Millet on local mud grinders , we have introduced Millet Mills at two places and one of the women groups managing it have been able to even sell it in local village market and neighborhood. Neither its taste nor demand has declined among the Korku.



## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Since our project area has Korku living in or around the forest, the environmental concerns exist. The excessive use of chemicals to grow cash crops, the use of wood for fuel, the biodiversity losses have been growing. To offset this we are promoting organic pesticide made from locally available ingredients like cow-urine and greens and so on. Encouraging results have been noticed. Similarly smokeless stoves have been promoted to reduce excessive dependence on wood from forest and problems women face at fetching them. 50 stoves have been set up and 100 more are ready to be installed.

The organization has also been proactively watching and profiling forest owlet to protect them as they are facing threat of extinction.

A special, Teaching-Learning chart has been developed and used in 30 Anganwadis. It helps children learn about the animals and wild life in their own Korku dialect.



## LAND & WATER CONSERVATION

As most of the Korku farmers have small landholdings and many of them are undulated. Similarly the water crisis has become to assume greater shape year and after year. Families are unable to get MGNREGA work as per their convenience or wages are delayed for long. The distress migration too has been increasing. The water sources have been drying faster. To address this issue we are running the Cloth of Work program. This program facilitates the indigenous tradition of mutual help where the community contributes through voluntary labor contribution (shramdaan) to develop their own and neighborhood land and water resources. In continuance of this process this works like well –deepening (18), pond – deepening (3), river rejuvenation (4), land –bund (32) were accomplished. This engaged 359 families and 3281 man-days of work could be undertaken. 92 acres of land could be treated.



## SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE

It has been a proactive process that has focused on demystifying malnutrition, bring about health seeking behavior, diet changes and develop a scientific temper. The communication materials are prepared keeping in mind the local expression and cultural relevance. Innovative materials have been developed mostly in Korku dialect. This has helped in generating discussion, fun and learning being in local dialect.

The preschool materials too have been developed in local dialect to help children learn their mother tongue in their language learning age.



A conscious process is underway to engage and orient the Community opinion leaders like Bhumka (tribal priest) and Padiyar (tribal quack). They use herbs and chants to treat various diseases and protect the families from evil eyes. They have great regard in the community as they are in the vicinity; do not exploit kinsmen and the lack of adequate government health facilities. We are trying to help them internalize the causes of malnutrition, learn bit of anthropometry like using a Mid Arm Upper Circumference (MUAC) measurement and advise the mothers of the malnourished kids to first opt for proper care and feeding. They also share vital information on traditional perception and treatment of various diseases, rituals and chants and history.

Sensitization campaigns have been organized periodically to help the target community internalize the importance of reviving Millets, updates on various food & Employment entitlements, participation in Gram Sabha to submit their plans and register their grievances. The campaign also has focused on importance of raising the demands like recognizing Rengu Koroku as a Freedom Fighter, inclusion of Koroku in PVTG category and Government promoting the production of Millet by buying it at Minimum Support Price and distributing it through Public Distribution System.

The campaigns resulted in preparing many more farmers to go for Millets. 635 job applications were prepared under MGNREGA could be submitted that generated wage employment for 1798 wage earners. 93 women could get Maternity Benefit.

A special awareness drive was conducted to help community especially frequently migrating families and adolescent girls were oriented on problems they face at destination, what acre to be taken, how to be safe and secure and so on. The 868 migrant workers were provided Migration Cards duly attested by Panchayats.

### **CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT**

A range of training, workshops and village meetings are being conducted. This year the capacity building initiatives included: Mothers meetings (48), Mothers' Training (24), Training of Adolescent Girls (14) Community Opinion Leaders training (20). And Training of Tribal priests & quacks (20) The skill building training comprised: Training on Millet growing (8), Training on making organic pesticide (5), Backyard nutrition garden growing training (13) and Training on Poultry Raising (1).

Apart from this programs were held to facilitate discussions and planning at grassroots that included: Interaction with ASHA, ANM & AWW (17), Micro Planning (34) and Sanitation Mapping (48). 7998 participants were engaged in these programs of capacity building.

### **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

Koroku tribe women have been at forefront in the initiated process to establish a community care model. They have shown leadership and entrepreneurship far outweighing their male counterparts. Currently 23 SHGs have been engaging women and this year they collected 166053 rupees and mutual help worth 100000 rupees was extended to members.

The women groups have been managing Grain Banks that support food insecure families during peak hunger times recurring for 2-3 months every year. This year 76 quintal of grain was available and needy families could access 55 quintals of grains.

In one of the SHGs women not only deepened their pond through voluntary labor but also raise and traded fish. In other women have not only de-husked the Millet mechanically but could also sell the surplus at local markets.

Nearly 500 women (including adolescent girls) have actively participated in discussions and training on reproductive hygiene and use of proper sanitary napkins. They have not only formed a platform to share their experience and



problems related to menstrual hygiene. They are regularly using the GOONJ sanitary napkins and can share their happiness and confidence and freedom they have been experiencing.

## PROGRAM IMPACT

This year the ongoing program generated following tangible and intangible outcomes:

- 550 children recovered from malnutrition in the community without having to resort to any facility based care.
- There has been significant increase in number of families that grew Millet. This will ensure availability of food and nutrition round the year for these families.
- The families having grown Backyard Nutrition gardens could have vegetables in their diets for most of the months and some could sell a bit to augment their income.
- The initial experience with backyard Poultry generated significant learning and it can now be scaled up. The families who raised chickens carefully had it for consumption and some could sell it to make some money. This is aimed at augmenting the protein intake of the family especially mother and child.
- The program of outreaching remotely located children with Vitamin A and Deworming and Multi vitamin for pregnant and lactating mothers has been helpful in bridging service delivery gaps.
- The women leadership and entrepreneurship has been on rise and they did splendid work at developing land and water resources, participation in programs and starting micro-enterprises. Their openness at discussing menstrual hygiene related issues and adoption of proper sanitary napkins has added to their freedom and self-respect.
- The Community Opinion Elders have shown great interest and have been showing trends at becoming social behavior change agents. It has added to our efforts at demystifying malnutrition and building a scientific temper in this indigenous community.

## FUTURE THRUST

- Scale up the Community Based malnutrition model to other tribal blocks. Establish the utility of the model with more evidence bases.
- Encourage increased production of Millet and Coarse crops and establish a platform where the Korku farmers can sell the surplus. The effort will be taken to a level where larger market potential can be explored to make the effort more sustainable and with triple advantage of nutrition, livelihood and biodiversity conservation.
- Promote Backyard Nutrition Gardens and Backyard Free range poultry as micro enterprises that target families can manage and along with a potential protein source have advantage of surplus selling.
- Document the Korku indigenous tradition and help inter-generational transfer of Knowledge.



